



CIA/IHTF-M-79-001
27 August 1979

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Data Processing
FROM: STATINTL
Chairman, CIA Information Handling Task
Force
SUBJECT: Component Survey of Information Handling

The attachments are intended to provide an understanding of the purpose of the Information Handling Study and of the study methodology. It is hoped that this information will facilitate communication between the Task Force members and members of your component.

Attachments:
A. Survey
B. Terms of Reference



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All portions of this document are UNCLASSIFIED.

Summary

A comprehensive strategy for information handling in CIA is being developed. Your participation is sought and, where applicable, your long-range plans for the provision and/or use of information services are requested. You are not being asked to write any new documentation, planning or issue papers.

1. CIA's Information Handling Task Force requests your participation in the development of a comprehensive strategy for provision and use of information services in the Agency. Initial data will be gathered separately concerning the provision of services and the use of services. This memorandum deals with your plans for the provision of information services. Guidance for your participation in this phase is contained in paragraph four below.

2. Background: The CIA Information Handling Task Force has been constituted by the EXCOM to develop a more comprehensive strategy for the provision and use of information services in the Agency. Included in the rather broad topic of information services are, at a minimum, the functional activities associated with ADP, communications, word processing, and registry/records management. The Task Force plans to review the current, available facilities that support information services, the plans for the continuation or expansion of these services by the providing components, and the plans for the use of these services as viewed by the user community. Once the initial data gathering tasks have been completed, we will develop recommendations pertaining to possible alternate strategies for planning and coordination of our information services resources.

We plan to examine information services from two perspectives - services provided and the use made of these services. Our initial efforts will concentrate on examining those components whom we feel are the primary providers of information services. While we recognize the fact that your organization is also a user of information services, we would prefer to address those requirements at a later time.

As indicated in the attached Terms of Reference, we recognize that if such an effort is to be successful, it is important that components affected by resultant recommendations or plans participate to the fullest extent possible. We depend on your cooperation.

3. Our prime interest in looking at the nature and extent of the services you provide is to determine:

- What services you currently provide, how you provide them, and to whom.
- Your plans (documented or otherwise) to continue, curtail, or expand these services, institute new ones, and the major investment decisions entailed.
- The interfaces with other Agency/community components in the provision of these services.
- Any issues you now face, or can reasonably anticipate, which are related to the support of these services.

4. Guidance: So that the Task Force can understand and appreciate your component's functions, plans, and problems, we would like to conduct a phased survey:

First:

Examination of any existing documentation - we will try to get as much information from these sources as possible so as to conserve the time you or your representatives will have to devote to personal briefing or discussions. There are three categories of documentation that we would like you to make available to us.

- a. Description of your organization and current information services provided.
- b. We would also like to examine any existing documents which address future plans for the support of information services. Our time frame of interest is ten years but any planning documents, regardless of scope, would be useful. We are particularly interested in the direction you see your organization going.
- c. We would be very interested in papers which address current or anticipated problems or issues in information services which are of particular concern to your component.

Second:

Following this examination, we would advise you of those systems, subjects, or issues on which we would like additional information. We would presume that this supplemental information would be best conveyed by an informal briefing given by your organization.

Third:

This briefing, or if you prefer, a series of briefings, would hopefully fill in the gaps in our understanding of your current and anticipated role in providing information services. We would also ask that you use this opportunity to indicate your primary information services concerns and the issues you would hope to see addressed by the Task Force. We would be happy to start the meeting(s) with a briefing which describes our objectives and methods as well as our progress to date.

Fourth:

Subsequent to the meeting(s), we would document and present for your review our perception of your present and planned information services to verify that our prior communications were in concert. Your concurrence of our interpretation of your plans and concerns should ensure that your interests receive equitable consideration in our subsequent analytical activities.

5. In addition to the four steps enumerated above, additional informal discussions with you or your key personnel might be required as our examination of other information services providers and users raise new issues. It is our intention to maintain a continuing informal dialogue as long as additional, useful information can be exchanged.

6. To reiterate, we are not asking you to write any documentation, planning, or issue papers. We feel that the existing store of written knowledge is sufficient to launch our study. Undoubtedly, we will ask for additional clarifying information, but this can probably be provided verbally, and we will delineate the specific information we require at a later time.

7. If there are any components with whom you feel we should become familiar before we talk to you, please advise so we can schedule accordingly.

8. We assume and hope that all information provided can be shared with other Agency components as required. If there are any aspects of confidentiality regarding your plans, we should be so advised.

9. If you have any questions regarding any aspect of this memorandum or if you would prefer an initial clarification meeting prior to the submission of pertinent documentation, please call [REDACTED]

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Members of the team are:

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[REDACTED] (chairman)

The task force is located in Room 3D57, Headquarters Building. Our mailing address is CIA/IHTF, 7D18 HQS.

10. Our time schedule is rather limited, so we would appreciate receipt of any current documentation described in paragraph four as soon as possible.

TERMS OF REFERENCE - INFORMATION HANDLING STUDY

The following paragraphs constitute the proposed terms of reference for the Information Handling Study approved by the DDCI on 7 May 1979.

The definition of Information Handling contained in EXCOM-19-79 is accepted as the most appropriate for the purposes of this study:

Information handling in CIA is the systematic creation, movement, use, storage, retrieval, and disposal of intelligence and management information with the support of automated or other clearly identifiable processes and with due regard for control of sensitive and compartmented data.

The Information Handling problem has been restated to clarify the reason for the study.

Problem: There is concern that traditional institutions dealing with provision of information services are becoming less effective as new technologies evolve, demand for service grows, and Agency resources shrink. There needs to be a reconciliation of demand vs. supply, a strategy for future investment, and assurance that appropriate institutions exist to execute the strategy.

The major goal of the Information Handling Study is to develop a comprehensive information handling strategy for the Agency and, if appropriate, define a management structure for more formal continuing coordination of the Agency's information handling activities. The strategy will evolve from a clear definition of needs and plans to meet these within resource constraints. The proposed elements of the strategy are: management, organization, operation, security, technology, and personnel.

The study will focus on the provision and use of information services within the Agency. Information services will be defined as those disciplines and technologies whose purpose is to facilitate information handling. The study will address the interface of the Agency information systems with collection and processing systems.

The primary product of the study will be a strategic plan covering the next ten-year period, addressing provision

and use of information services. The strategic plan will establish goals and priorities, speak to the resources required to address those goals, and set policy governing acquisition, use and disposition of resources. The structure of the plan will be such that subsequent planning for implementation can be delegated to lower levels. The plan will allow for orderly piecewise execution in consonance with resource allocations and operational imperatives.

If warranted, the plan will be accompanied by recommendations for changes in management systems and organizational structure.

Issues which the study will include, but not be limited to are:

a. Management

To what degree can central management of information handling contribute to the provision of information services? While there is popular enthusiasm for further centralization of management functions associated with information handling, there needs to be a careful assessment of what functions need to be centralized to improve provision and use of information services.

b. Standards

To what degree can standardization contribute to the efficiency and effectiveness with which information services are provided? Standards could cover equipment, programming, engineering, documentation, or management systems.

c. Structure

To what degree should technology influence Agency organization? The apportionment of missions to some components is based, in part, on historic technological definitions which may now be obsolete. As technology evolves, a reallocation of the division of labor might be useful and even necessary to clarify roles. However, the value of organizational realignment must be weighed against the employee morale, personnel management, and budgetary impact of change.

d. Compartmentation

To what degree can systems and data bases be shared without jeopardy to security and compartmentation? Increased efficiency will often result from aggregation of user needs and resource sharing. Strategies need to be identified that will maximize efficiencies within constraints imposed by security and compartmentation.

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Approved For Release 2002/05/17 : CIA-RDP84-00933R000100310003-6

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